# Office of the County Auditor Auditor's Analysis

### Council Bill No. 58-2020

Introduced: October 5, 2020 Auditor: Owen Clark

#### Fiscal Impact:

We anticipate an indirect fiscal impact from this legislation in the form of increased County transfer and recordation taxes from the sale of reconfigured preservation parcels, sized as small as 3 acres, with residential dwellings or development rights attached to them.

We verified with the Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) that the resulting 3-acre parcel would allow for one dwelling unit and could be sold. We believe the resulting smaller residential preservation parcels may be more easily sold as residential dwellings or developable land than the larger preservation parcels (which will have existed before this legislation).

#### Purpose:

The purpose of this legislation is to amend the Howard County Zoning Regulations to allow adjoining preservation parcels that were created through the cluster subdivision or density exchange option regulations to be combined, assuming the reconfiguration better facilitates the purpose of the preservation parcel.

The main items addressed include:

- The ability to combine adjoining preservation parcels without the restriction that the reconfigured parcels each remain at least 20 acres in size.
- Prohibiting reconfigurations that create additional or new residential development rights.
- Requiring affected deeds of easement to be amended to reflect the land reconfiguration and all property to remain subject to pre-existing easement provisions.

#### Other Comments:

The Department of Planning and Zoning issued a Technical Staff Report for Zoning Regulations Amendment (ZRA) 190 on May 21, 2020, indicating their general approval of this legislation's text. The report indicated that:

- It is in harmony with the General Plan, since it enhances flexibility for the agricultural community by relaxing restrictions on farm expansions on preservation parcels.
- It requires text amendments to ensure it applies to preservation parcels both created through the subdivision process and those created through the density sending option.

The Howard County Planning Board issued a recommendation for approval of ZRA-190 on July 23, 2020. A noted discussion point in the recommendation was how the ZRA may allow more flexibility to make use of existing preservation parcels.

Per the Administration:

- The agricultural easements that have been dedicated to the County will have to be approved by the Agricultural Planning Board prior to their reconfiguration.
- All preservation parcels would require the consensus of its easement holders prior to reconfiguration and still be governed by the requirements of the easement.
  - Other easement holders could include the Maryland Environmental Trust or a private entity. There are no federal agricultural easements in Howard County.
- An exact accounting of the affected parcels is not currently available since it is not known which of them are adjoining and have development rights.
  - However, DPZ identified a total of 659 parcels and 11,712 acres of preservation easements that represent "potentially impacted projects." *A listing of these parcels can be provided to the Council upon request.*
- There are two specific parcels that are associated with this ZRA. Please see the details of each proposed reconfiguration in **Attachment A.**

## Attachment A

Per the Administration, the parcels associated with CB58-2020/ZRA-190 are:

1) The McDaniel Property (Tax Map 34 Parcel 117)

The images in Attachment B show the proposed reconfiguration as noted below.

The two parcels to be combined are the McDaniel Property Non-Buildable Preservation Parcel B (F-14-021) and Koandah Estates Buildable Preservation Parcel A. The request is to combine these two parcels into one non-buildable parcel (Non-buildable Preservation Parcel C) except for 1.3 acres of the Koandah Estates Buildable Preservation Parcel A, which is proposed as a 1.3 acre buildable lot (Lot 9). Lot 9 would adjoin the property boundary of Koandah Estates Open Space Lot 22. This is where a new dwelling unit could be constructed. There are no existing structures on either preservation parcel.

2) Two properties on Penn Shop Road – Harrison Property (Tax Map 6, Parcel 19) and Crowder Property (Tax Map 6, Parcel 86)

See Map below: In this scenario, all but the 3 acres surrounding the existing house (indicated by the red line) of the 37-acre parcel would be shifted to the 52-acre parcel. The result would be an 86 +/- acre farm and a 3-acre residential lot, still under the agricultural conservation easement.





